



March 19, 2008

RE: USDA/AMS proposal to add a 5% shatter allowance

To Whom It May Concern:

I write in support of an industry wide effort led by the California Grape & Tree Fruit League to revise tolerances to include an additional 5 percent allowance for shattered berries in consumer size container en route or destination.

While table grape shatter is a real occurrence, adoption of an additional five percent will only further resemble market conditions which allow for product use without compromising quality. Good healthy berries that are shattered are merchandisable. By definition and grading standard shatter represents grapes that are not attached to the stem. This new ruling would only apply to grapes in a consumer package, such as bags or clamshells. It only affects tolerance at destination and still recognizes factors of damage or decay and product would be scored according upon receiving.

Furthermore, an additional 5 percent allowance lessens the economic impact to the grower/shipper. In 2006 24(# of loads discounted due to shatter) loads were discounted due to shatter amounting to losses totaling over \$91,000 (Total \$ Amount Discounted). The present standard should not represent a loss clause that impedes economic sustainability.

For these reasons I ask for the prompt adoption of the current shatter proposal. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jerry Hongola". The signature is fluid and cursive.

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